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12 July 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Systems Analysis Staff

FROM :

[REDACTED]  
Chief, Agency Archives & Records CenterSUBJECT : Meeting between National Security Agency  
(NSA) Declassification Officers and  
Members of Records Review Branch (RRB)

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1. [REDACTED] Chief of NSA's Records Declassification and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Programs, and his associate, [REDACTED] visited RRB in its recently acquired office space at my invitation on 7 July 1977 from 1030 to 1430 hours. The purpose of my invitation was to tighten liaison with NSA and continue the recently initiated exchange of information and experiences derived from our respective declassification programs. The following RRB personnel attended: [REDACTED] Senior Review Officer; and [REDACTED], the DDI Focal Point Officer. Mr. [REDACTED] of ISAS, and I were also present.

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2. [REDACTED] opened the meeting with a short history of our declassification program and description of its current status. Thereafter, the meeting took on a rambling but animated style. The NSA men rather quickly defined parameters of the materials they intend to declassify. With some possible minor exceptions, such as innocuous policy and management papers, these are restricted to cryptographic messages of enemy belligerents during World War II. Italy and some unspecified countries were not included among the "enemy".

3. NSA plans to declassify nothing created after 30 December 1945. Our visitors believe they can hold the line at 1 January 1946 with these instruments:

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-- The National Security Act of 1947, which protects cryptology and cryptographic materials



-- A US Code going back to 1933 that forbids public disclosure of the diplomatic correspondence of foreign missions.

NSA, however, has been attempting to strengthen its position vis-a-vis declassification exemptions it needs by having an Executive Order published that states these exemptions and/or have such content read into Executive Order 11652.

4. The NSA visitors believe declassification should be an Intelligence Community or Government-wide project with possible direction from the National Foreign Intelligence Board. They took interest in how we are developing our declassification guidelines by organization and function. They have built theirs around categories or subjects. They promised us a copy of NSA's Declassification Plan, a compilation of US Statutes governing the protection and use of cryptology and cryptographic materials, and an unclassified paper on NSA's role in the evolution of the US computer industry as an example of NSA success in satisfying some legitimate needs of researchers. They also promised written authorization for CIA to exempt from declassification COMINT materials dated after 30 December 1945. The NSA men asked, however, to be consulted should we turn up any pre-1946 COMINT without a codeword classification. Uneven procedures were in practice during the war and some stations did not use codewords when classifying messages they intercepted.

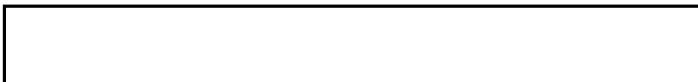
5. There was a running exchange of FOIA "horror tales" that turned up how NSA charges its "customers". A fee of \$2.00 is placed on the first six pages of each request. Thereafter, the requestor pays 5¢ a page, including the blank ones supplied to show where and how much data was withheld.

6. [redacted] asked what we intend to do with our declassified documents. The mood of the Agency, we replied, is to offer them to the National Archives forthwith. The NSA men asked how we will know which of our records has been declassified. [redacted] answered that we would meet with computer applications experts the next day for the

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purpose of tackling this problem. After kicking around many of the ramifications connected with keeping such a record, the NSA men speculated that a Government-wide data bank of document IDs would greatly simplify the work ahead. [redacted] said a digital ID system might permit such a data base to be unclassified.

7. I asked an archival question: "Does NSA ever throw away an intercept?" The answer was "No". Even when hard copy is destroyed, the message is retained on tape.



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